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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#)  
SUBJECT: OBAMA WINS THE HEARTS OF TURKISH MEDIA  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2009

In Today's Papers

POTUS Visit Special Edition: U.S. President Barack Obama "Wins the Hearts of the Turkish People." (Vatan)

The Obama Difference. (Cumhuriyet)  
Media outlets are raving over U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Turkey. Obama's messages are praised in the media, as Obama's visit emphasized 'a new model' for Turkey-U.S. relations and a focus on secularism, democratic foundations and respect for Islam. Liberal Radikal carries the headline, "Let Our Partnership Be a Model." Islamist-oriented Zaman quotes Obama in the headline "We Can Establish a Model Partnership." Mainstream Milliyet notes "Obama Created A New Era at the Parliament" by "Setting Off on A Journey With Turkey," where "The Turkey-U.S. partnership can serve as a model to the entire world." Meanwhile, mainstream Sabah reports in "Obama's Ankara Manifesto" that Obama has three requests for Turkey, "Open the border with Armenia," and "Discuss the events of 1915," and "Open Halki Seminary." Mainstream Hurriyet headlines "From Here On, We All Must Change." Mainstream Haberturk headlines "He Didn't Back Down," as Obama "sent important messages to the world." Can Dundar of mainstream Milliyet writes, "President Obama's visit has signified a new climate in Turkish-American relations. Unlike the previous presidency, Obama's arrival has boosted America's approval ratings." Mainstream Sabah's Mehmet Barlas comments, "In this new world order, the U.S. is again standing by Turkey's side." Ali Bayramoglu of Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak notes, "It seems the new Washington administration does not share the former administration's obsession with security threats and the new Washington will focus on ways to overcome religious, cultural and other differences. Obama's vision serves as an opportunity for Turkey." Mainstream Vatan's Gungor Mengi writes in "The Walls Have Been Brought Down," that Obama's visit "is a diplomatic success for Turkey as well" because "after Bush's rough cowboy manner, Obama has healed the rifts created by Bush." Fehmi Koru in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak commented, "The framework of Obama's vision is about democracy and secularism in a broader sense that embracing differences. In this context, Turkey should be able to eliminate some of its peripheral problems that President Obama mentioned, like the PKK, Armenia, and Halki Seminary. Turkey should exert all of its energy to present

itself as a model country."

#### Obama Emphasized Secularism

Secularist and liberal papers note with beaming pride that President Obama emphasized Ataturk's secularist principles. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries a commentary from its editorial board entitled "The Obama Difference" and comments, "Obama has proven that he is different from George Bush by showing that he does not see Turkey as 'a moderate Islamic State' but as a secularist democracy." Cumhuriyet's banner headline today declares, with a tinge of welcome relief, "He Emphasized the Secular Democracy." Mainstream Milliyet points out, "Obama emphasized his support of Ataturk's secularist principles by visiting Anitkabir in the morning and referring to Ataturk in his parliamentary address." Oktay Eksi of mainstream Hurriyet wrote, "President Obama gave very well crafted and substantive messages. Obama is a leader who understands Ataturk better than some in Turkey." Murat Yetkin of liberal Radikal commented "Obama compared Ataturk to George Washington," which "was the most important part of the speech" and "the military officials who attended the speech must have been very pleased." Ismet Berkan of liberal Radikal noted, "Unlike Bush, President Obama is focusing on the rule of law within the context of Turkey's secular democracy. This marks an enormous change in the U.S. approach to Turkey."

Obama: "We Are Not At War With Islam."

Also, media note the Obama delivered messages of peace to the Islamic world when he told the Turkish Parliament "We are not at war with Islam." Under the headline, "Historic and Warm Messages," Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "Obama emphasized that the U.S.

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never has been and never will be at war with Islam," and Obama "connected with the majority Muslim population in Turkey" by saying "Many Americans have Muslims in their families, including me." Leftist Taraf quotes President Obama in the banner headline, "We Are Not At War With Islam," and the paper comments "The U.S. President delivered message to the whole world from the Turkish Parliament," that "the spirit of conflict that followed 9/11 has been brought to an end." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak quotes Obama in its banner headline, "There are Muslims in My Family," as "Obama Works To Repair Bush's Mistakes." Meanwhile, Ibrahim Karagul of Yeni Safak writes, "Obama's words may be forgotten if there are new missile strikes against Afghanistan or Pakistan tomorrow."

#### Support for Normalization of Ties Between Turkey and Armenia

Media also point out that Obama has offered support to Turkey's efforts with Armenia. Zaman notes that Obama "Gave support to Turkey's efforts with Armenia," and "signaled that he will not use the word 'genocide' to refer to the events of 1915 because he referred to those events as 'a difficult and tragic history,'" but noted "I want to do what I can to support the important positive developments between Turks and Armenians." CNN Turk reports, "President Obama signaled that he will not use the word 'genocide' and noted that he wants Turkey and Armenia to work out their differences."

#### Obama Gives Strong Support for Turkey's EU Bid

Obama's messages in support of Turkey's EU bid are featured in several papers. Taraf headlines with, "Europe Will Be Stronger With You." Islamist Zaman comments in "Clear Messages to Europe and the Muslim World," that "Despite reactions from France and Germany, Obama emphasized 'Turkey is part of Europe.'" Mainstream Milliyet reports "Obama gave strong support to Turkey's bid for EU entry."

#### Rasmussen Declines to Apologize for Cartoon Crisis

Turkiye, Zaman, Vatan, Radikal, Hurriyet, Sabah, Milliyet and others: Today's papers report that former PM of Denmark and NATO's incoming secretary-general Anders Fogh Rasmussen conveyed no apology for the international crisis that developed after a Danish newspaper published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed. Islamist-oriented Zaman notes that during his speech at the Alliance of Civilizations meeting in Istanbul, Rasmussen tried to please the Islamic world by saying he respected all religions, religious symbols and religious sentiments of people. Liberal Radikal reports that Rasmussen did not apologize but said "the freedom of expression has utmost

importance for free societies, however we should exercise responsibility by showing respect to the religions and beliefs of others." Mainstream Vatan reports that regarding the closure of Roj TV, Rasmussen said "Danish authorities are investigating the links between ROJ TV and the PKK. What needs to be done will be done if proof is found about the links with the terrorist organization." Mainstream Aksam says "Rasmussen shied away from fulfilling promises regarding Turkey that he made in exchange for the Turkey's support for his bid to undertake the post of NATO Secretary General."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Ankara and Istanbul are paralyzed by tight security measures for the visit of President Obama.
- The Istanbul Exhibition and Congress Center was totally destroyed by a fire that broke out in the building early on Monday.

World

- More than 150 people were killed in 6.3 magnitude earthquake in Italy.

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- A Palestinian doctor who lost his three daughters at an Israeli troop operation in Gaza, was nominated for the Nobel peace prize.
- Six car bombs exploded in Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad killing at least 36 people.

JEFFREY